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## CURRENT EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE

*Studies of Childhood.* By JAMES SULLY, M. A., LL. D. II. *The Imaginative Side of Play.* Popular Science Monthly, September, 1894.

Child play may be described as the working out into actual visible shape of an inner fancy. The actual surroundings may supply the starting point, but this suggestion by something present is accidental. The root impulse of play is to realize a bright, pretty idea ; hence its close kinship with art as a whole. The desire to be something, to act a part, is the fundamental impulse of play. The child adventurer, as he personates Robinson Crusoe, steps out of his every-day self and so out of his every-day world. Thus he virtually transforms his surroundings, since they take on the look and the meaning which the part assigns to them.

The impulse to act appears early and grows out of the imitative instinct. There is no need to suppose that the child consciously acts a part. A child is one creature when it is truly at play, another when it is bent on astonishing or amusing you. When at play it is possessed of an idea and is working this out into visible action. That the instinct springs out of the deepest and least sophisticated part of the child nature is shown by the fact that it comes out most distinctly when the child is alone.

The essence of play is thus in a sense dramatic, though unconsciously so. The actual external surroundings play a greater or less part, according to the needs of the players. A step toward a more realistic kind of play action is taken when a scene is constructed, the chairs and sofa turned into ships, carriages, a railway train, and so forth. Yet the scene is but a subordinate part of infantile play. Next to itself the child wants a living companion. Something alive there must be, or something to simulate life. Perhaps the most interesting feature of childish play is this transmutation of the most meagre and least promising things into complete living forms. The doll takes a supreme place in this fancy-realm of play. The vivification of the doll is the outcome of the play impulse, and this is an impulse to act out, to realize an idea in outward show. The absorption in the idea and its outward expression serves to blot out the incongruities of scene and actors which a cold observer would note.

The intensity of the imaginative realizing powers in play is seen in the stickling for fidelity to the original in all playful reproduction.

Pictures and artistic reproductions generally are another domain of childish activity where we may observe a like suffusion of the world of sense by imagination.

In the forms in which children's play works itself out we see a good deal more of the child's mind; we see intelligence and, to some extent, also character. In his play we seem to catch the child in his own world, acting out his own impulses without stimulus, guidance, or restraint from others. Here he creates his own world—a world which, like those we all create in our several fashions, bears on every feature the stamp of the creative mind.

*School Excursions in Germany.* By J. M. RICE. The Century, September, 1894.

An account of a school journey undertaken in the summer of 1893, as a preparation for the study of the history of the Reformation. The class of boys were from ten to twelve years old, and they travelled first to Bavaria to study the appearance and customs of a Catholic country, and thence through the Thuringian forest, particularly through those regions where Luther lived while translating the Bible. The account affords many suggestive glimpses of German methods of instruction and its results.

*Teaching by Travel: A School Excursion from Indiana to Virginia.*  
By J. M. RICE. Forum, September, 1894.

Dr. Rice's experience of the benefits derived from the school excursion in Germany, inspired the school authorities of Anderson, Indiana, to make the experiments which Dr. Rice chronicles in the September number of the *Forum*. The route over which his party travelled is described and various interesting details recounted, and finally Dr. Rice has a word of criticism on the pedagogic value of his trip and offers suggestions for the guidance of those who may wish to experiment in this direction.